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Wheeler's Squadrons Led by War Veterans—The Single Highway Jammed With Troops—Orders, Orders, All Along the Line—Coolness Under Fire.

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VII.



NE of the stories floating around division headquarters is that soon after noon on July 1, when the battle was heavy at San Juan ridge, but there was something of a lull at El Caney, General Shafter's aid went to Lawton with a verbal order to abandon the attack there and go forward to El Caney road heights as originally intended. Some such order was sent. The story goes on to say that Lawton told the aid he must fetch it in writing; that he went to army headquarters, got it in writing and returned with it to Lawton. At that hour Chaffee's men were charging forward, and Lawton pointed to them, saying to the aid, "It's too late." The aid insisted, saying, "But I must deliver it." "All right," said Lawton. "You will have to deliver it on the firing line." As that was impossible, the charge went through.

General Chaffee, when pressed for his views about Lawton in the El Caney business, simply said, "Lawton is a lion."

Lawton started from El Caney for the position on the El Caney road heights about dark on the evening of July 1. At that hour the divisions of Wheeler and Kent were busily digging trenches on the captured crest of San Juan ridge. The story of Lawton's further adventures in getting into the position assigned him will be taken up after a description of the battle of Wheeler and Kent on the American left. The whole illustrates the adage, universally applicable in war, about the best laid plans going "aft agley." In point of fact, El Caney fell about a day behind time, and that threw the battle of the San Juan ridge a day ahead of time as planned.

As the cavalry division was the next in order after Lawton, from right to left, when the army faced Santiago, and was the first to score a success on the San Juan heights, its story should next be told.

In the march down from El Poso to the crossing of the San Juan, the brigade of General Sumner, then commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Henry Carroll of the Sixth cavalry, had the lead. At that time Sumner was in temporary command of the division. The strength of Carroll's brigade that day in the fighting line was about 900. The Ninth cavalry, colored, under Lieutenant Colonel J. M. Hamilton, on the right of the brigade, had but one squadron in the fight. It was commanded by Major A. D. Dimmick. The Third cavalry was led by Major H. W. Wessels, son of Major General Wessels, distinguished in the civil war. The First squadron was commanded by Major Henry Jackson and the Second by Charles Morton. The Sixth cavalry, Sumner's own regiment, was led by Major T. C. Lebo.

With the exception of Wessels, all squadron and regimental officers, like the division and brigade leaders, were war tried veterans. Hamilton had served in the Thirty-third New York, Dimmick in the Fifth New York cavalry, Jackson in the regular cavalry and Morton in the Twenty-fifth Missouri as a boy, afterward polishing off at West Point. Lebo served through the war in the First Pennsylvania cavalry. All these officers are born soldiers, not carpet knights.

The brigade lost many men while lying along the road before the advance began, Grimes' battery having opened on the Spanish works about 7:50 in the morning, drawing fire of shell and shrapnel, some of which fell short of the target on El Poso hill and dropped among the troops lining the road to the front. At the very beginning there was a delay at the crossings of the creeks and river. The cavalry was on the right of the road, and the men say that they crossed the Aguadores several times, and that, including the San Juan, they waded streams six times before they were lined up in the charge. In some places the San Juan was up to the waist, and at other points the water was so deep and the current so strong that some of the men had to be assisted to save drowning.

The Third cavalry, which was on the right of Kent's infantry, lost heavily in what is sometimes called "The Bloody Angle," between the Guama and the San Juan, north of the junction of these streams. This place will also go down in the memory of Santiago survivors as "Hell's Crossing." The first man I met at Camp Montauk in the Third cavalry, Captain G. A. Dodd of Troop F, made famous by the Cosack drill, carries a long scar down his forehead, which was given him at the angle by a piece of shrapnel. A Spanish

Continued on Page 6.

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